



Other Planning Efforts in the Tortugas

Dry Tortugas National Park

The National Park Service is completing a planning process to address visitor use and commercial service issues at Dry Tortugas National Park. A Draft General Management Plan Amendment that identifies the types and levels of visitor activities and services consistent with protecting park resources and assuring quality visitor experiences will be released at the end of May. The Plan presents and analyzes five alternatives for future directions for management and use and advances a proposed action based on planning considerations, available information, and significant public review and comment. The National Park Service is committed to sustained public involvement and participation and will be continuing to join the Sanctuary in a series of public hearings to gain further input. For more information on this process, visit the Dry Tortugas National Park planning website at <http://www.nps.gov/drto/planning> or contact Mr. Jeffrey Scott at (305) 242-7706.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted in December 1999 to consider creating a no-fishing area for those portions of the proposed Tortugas Ecological Reserve that lie within Florida state waters. The Commission is soliciting comments from the public on this proposed rule through a series of public hearings being held in conjunction with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's hearings on the Tortugas Ecological Reserve. For more information on the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's proposed rule for the Tortugas, contact Dr. Russell Nelson at (850) 487-0554.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering a generic amendment to their fishery management plans that would create a no-take marine reserve for all of Tortugas South and the northwest corner of Tortugas North that lies in Federal waters. The Joint Marine Reserve/Reef Fish Management Committees for

the Gulf Council are recommending that all fishing, diving, and anchoring be prohibited in the two reserves. The Gulf Council will be asking the public for their input on this amendment through two public meetings being held on June 21 in Marathon and on June 22 in Key West, in conjunction with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's hearings on the Tortugas Ecological Reserve. All written public comments must be received in the Council office by June 30. The Council will hear public testimony on the issue on July 12 at its meeting in Key Largo before taking final action. For more information on the Gulf Council's proposed amendment for the Tortugas, contact Mr. Wayne Swingle at (813) 228-2815 or 1-888-833-1844.

*Note: This article appeared in the Summer 2000 issue of the newsletter of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, **Sounding Line**. For more information, visit: floridakeys.noaa.gov/.*

